

It's A VISTA Life

Facilitator's Guide

Introduction

Explain that the purpose of this game is to help new VISTA members understand the local program benefits and policies compared to the national program introduced during the PSO. The goal is to also help VISTA members problem solve to common situations that may occur during service, and highlight some local entertainment options they can experience. The overall purpose is to give VISTA members a clearer picture of what a true "VISTA Life" looks like.

Then explain the directions on how to play. Explain that the goal of the game is to come out with money and the most "Experience Points" ... because VISTA is not about money, it's and experience.

Directions are:

1. Each player roles the dice once. The person with the highest number goes first and it rotates clockwise. (Hint: If you have a large group of 6 players or more, divide them into smaller teams.)
2. Choose a volunteers for the following roles:
 - "Banker" or "CNCS Payroll" or whomever distributes the money for your program. This individual is responsible for distributing and collecting money throughout the game.
 - Experience Points distributor.
 - Training/Member Development Card distributor.
 - Scenario Card distributor.
3. Every player gets \$\$\$ (give them 1 stipend check's worth to start the game).
4. Shake the dice and move the number of spaces. Follow the directions on the square.
 - There are various squares on the board where players will have to pay, move back or forward spaces, or receive money.
 - Some require them to answer a question from which they could receive Experience Points or benefits (Scenario Questions).
 - Some give them choices for personal budgeting.
5. The game ends when all players finish their term (land on the VISTA logo in the middle).
6. The person who wins will be the one with the most Experience Points and not in debt.

Your Role

Your role throughout the game is to facilitate the discussion. These are new members and may not yet be familiar with the community, resources, program structure or policies. Allow the members to problem solve first, and then provide the correct answer or other possible solutions they could consider.

PROGRAM POLICIES & BENEFITS

Game Questions	Possible Talking Points
PSO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Stands for "Pre-Service Orientation".▪ Goal was to familiarize you with the national program and prepare you for service.

Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mandatory training. ▪ Familiarizes you for how the VISTA program fits and runs within this program. ▪ What items should they be discussing with their supervisor their first week?
You want to take a week vacation to visit family in New York.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Request procedure and policy. ▪ Are they allowed to request time off their first month; last month? ▪ Introduce to Request Form in Policy Binder.
You had a cooking accident and experience 3 rd Degree burns. The doctor puts you on leave for 2 months. Go back 2 spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What does this mean for the term? ▪ What happens with benefits?
Your supervisor has asked you to work for the last 4 Saturdays.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What can they do? ▪ Could they use a personal day? ▪ Could they have a conversation with their supervisor about balance? ▪ Do they see a need for other resources – volunteers?
You don't get along with your roommate and want to move.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review housing locating resources received in Welcome Packet. ▪ What is the timeline for processing changes in housing to ensure that payments are received accurately and on time?
You had to relocate from San Francisco to Orange County for VISTA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss relocation reimbursement. ▪ Discuss support systems to rely on in a new community.
Relocation amount will be 550.00 shipment will be \$100. RECEIVE \$650	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CNCS pays for relocation. The check comes from them.
You noticed that your living stipend check was incorrect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Call PHFE.
Your housing stipend was not received by your landlord on time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Call Emily at PHFE.
PAY DAY! You receive your living stipend check. RECEIVE \$949.00 month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make sure they know that taxes will be taken out!
Your landlord receives your Housing stipend check. RECEIVE \$850.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss policy and who pays. ▪ Realize that this is something not all VISTA members receive.
You turned in your monthly VISTA mileage reimbursement. RECEIVE \$100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who pays the mileage? ▪ What is the policy and procedure?
Quarterly Report Due.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Train them on reporting questions and how to complete. What are you asking? ▪ Explain the process and who reviews the report. Why is it important to be accurate?
You created a great resource and share it with other VISTAs at the Team Meeting. Jump Ahead 2 spaces!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss the team meetings and their purpose. ▪ What role will the VISTA play?
Work Plan Due update is due.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review work plan and its purpose. ▪ How does it tie into reporting?
You attend Career Development Day (or other trainings you provide).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss the member development opportunities available.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss any major trainings or conferences they are expected to attend. ▪ What is the training policy? ▪ Review training schedule. ▪ Do they need to get their supervisors permission? ▪ Do they need to make up the hours if they attend?
Project delay. You choose to extend 3 months. Go back 3 spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the term commitment? ▪ Explain the extension option and timing. ▪ When would a VISTA want to consider this option?
You attend IST!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stands for “In-Service Training” and is a required training with CNCS 3 – 4 months into service. ▪ How will they know to attend? ▪ What is covered?
You have a family emergency and need to get to NY ASAP!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explain the CNCS policy on Emergency travel and how to access. ▪ Who and when do they need to notify within the program?
You are having issues with your supervisor and want to quit the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are some conflict resolution options before it gets to this point? ▪ Explain the termination and transfer policy and procedure. ▪ Do they have a VISTA Leader?
You attend a Service Day event with AmeriCorps members!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is AmeriCorps? ▪ What are Service Days and why would they want to participate? ▪ Review calendar of events. ▪ Do they need supervisor’s permission or make up the hours?
You find a great training opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explain that some sites, not all, have separate training dollars set aside for their member. They should talk to their site supervisor. ▪ Review Member Development Plans.

BUDGETING

Game Questions	Possible Talking Points
Car Insurance due. PAY \$60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Break out the budgeting tools! ▪ Help them set a realistic budget within their VISTA allowance.
Your sick and need to go to the doctor. PAY \$5 co-pay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss VISTA Healthcare plan benefits. ▪ Do you have a list of local doctors that accept the insurance?
Your car didn’t pass smog. PAY \$60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is a “Smog” test?
You need to buy groceries. PAY \$100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss the food stamp option and prepare them for the experience. ▪ Show them the “Food Stamp Application Kit”. ▪ Do you have a list of local grocery chains?
You applied for and were awarded food stamps. RECEIVE \$50.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Show them the “Food Stamp Application Kit” and discuss this option.
You need to get gas. PAY \$50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How much does it cost to buy gas per month?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remind them about the mileage reimbursement policy. ▪ Is there alternative transportation to consider?
Staff outing for lunch. PAY \$15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What if they find they don't have money? How can they save the embarrassment of saying no?
Bills Due. Pay \$100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What utilities should they expect to pay? ▪ Where or how do they sign up?
You get a parking ticket. PAY \$30 and go back 2 spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪
Your out of money and need food.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What local resources are available for support?
Choose or Not Choose: Weekend activity to Disneyland. PAY \$63	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What entertainment options are in the area? ▪ Is there a map?
Choose or Not Choose: Weekend activity to the beach. PAY \$10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What low cost options are available? ▪ Is there a map?
Choose or Not Choose: You attend the VISTA Social. FREE and jump ahead 1 space! (Choose or Not Choose: You invite some friends over for dinner. FREE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does your program ever get all the members together? ▪ How can they find/develop a social network?

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Game Questions & Scenarios

Below are possible squares for the board.

PROGRAM POLICIES & BENEFITS:

1. PSO
2. Orientation
3. You want to take a week vacation to visit family in New York.
4. You had a cooking accident and experience 3rd Degree burns. The doctor puts you on leave for 2 months. Go back 2 spaces.
5. Your supervisor has asked you to work for the last 4 Saturdays.
6. You don't get along with your roommate and want to move.
7. You had to relocate from San Francisco to Orange County for VISTA.
8. Relocation amount will be 550.00 shipment will be \$100. RECEIVE \$650
9. You noticed that your living stipend check was incorrect.
10. Your housing stipend was not received by your landlord on time.
11. PAY DAY! You receive your living stipend check. RECEIVE \$949.00 month
12. Your landlord receives your Housing stipend check. RECEIVE \$850.00
13. You turned in your monthly VISTA mileage reimbursement. RECEIVE \$100 How should be do this one its .445 per a mile
14. Quarterly Report Due.
15. You created a great resource and share it with other VISTAs at the Team Meeting. Jump Ahead 2 spaces!
16. Work Plan Due to CONNECT.
17. You attend Career Development Day.
18. You attend a training on Grant Writing.
19. You attend a training on Communication.
20. You attend a training on Conflict Resolution.
21. You attend a training on Program Evaluation.
22. You attend a training on Marketing and Outreach.
23. You attend a training on Business Writing.
24. You attend a training on Volunteer Management.
25. You attend a training on Time Management.
26. You attend a training on Public Speaking.
27. You attend the VISTA Team Meeting.
28. Project delay. You choose to extend 3 months. Go back 3 spaces.
29. You attend CDT!
30. You have a family emergency and need to get to NY ASAP!
31. You are having issues with your supervisor and want to quit the program.
32. You attend a Service Day event with AmeriCorps members!
33. You attend a Commission Outreach Event!
34. You find a great training opportunity!
35. You find a great community resource and share with other VISTAs. Jump ahead 2 spaces!

BUDGETING:

1. Car Insurance due. PAY \$60
2. Your sick and need to go to the doctor. PAY \$5 co-pay
3. Your car didn't pass smog. PAY \$60
4. You need to buy groceries. PAY \$150
5. You applied for and were awarded food stamps. RECEIVE \$150.00
6. You need to get gas. PAY \$200
7. Staff outing for lunch. PAY \$15
8. Bills Due. Pay \$100
9. You get a parking ticket. PAY \$30 and go back 2 spaces.
10. Your out of money and need food.

OTHER BUDGETING:

1. Choose or Not Choose: Weekend activity to Disneyland. PAY \$63
2. Choose or Not Choose: Weekend activity to the beach. PAY \$10
3. Choose or Not Choose: Fitness Club Membership. PAY \$24
4. Choose or Not Choose: You attend the VISTA Social. FREE and jump ahead 1 space!
5. Choose or Not Choose: Train ride to Santa Barbara. PAY \$50
6. Choose or Not Choose: You pick up Starbucks Coffee this morning. PAY \$5
7. Choose or Not Choose: You go to a cheap movie theater at Main Place Mall. PAY \$2
8. Choose or Not Choose: You go to a movie at Edwards Theater. PAY \$10
9. Choose or Not Choose: You grab a cup of coffee and read a book at Barnes & Noble. PAY \$5
10. Choose or Not Choose: You go to a club with some fellow VISTAs. PAY \$50
11. Choose or Not Choose: You invite some friends over for dinner. FREE
12. Choose or Not Choose: You go out for dinner with some friends. PAY \$25